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BOOK REVIEWS.

FACT AND FABLE IN PSYCHOLOGY. By *Joseph Jastrow*, Professor in the University of Wisconsin. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. 1900. Pp. 375. Price, \$2.00.

Professor Jastrow has done a real service to his chosen science and to the cause of sound thinking generally by reprinting in book form this series of articles written on various occasions but informed by the common aim of aiding the intelligent layman to distinguish the method and discipline of the serious study of mental phenomena from the superstitions and charlatanisms that are fast bringing the very name of psychology into disrepute.

The book is in the first place a convenient and readable history in outline of those curious movements of opinion indicated by the terms occultism, spiritualism, telepathy, psychical research, mesmerism, hypnotism, and the like. But it is much more than this. While entertaining us with the performances of Slade the medium and the peregrinations of the earthly and astral bodies of Madame Blavatsky, or summarising for us the results of investigations conducted by the Society for Psychical Research, Professor Jastrow deftly supplies the antidote in the form of a convincing psychological analysis of the mental habit that fosters and is fostered by such delusions, and further confirms our sanity by frequent administrations of fortifying logical tonic. He will of course not produce the slightest effect on the great mass of those who wish to be gulled, or upon minds too soft to retain the impress of an argument.

But there is a very considerable number of educated men who are genuinely bewildered by the difficulty of distinguishing between the legitimate wonders of modern physical science and the startling things reported by those who profess to be cultivating the extreme borderlands of the science of mind. At first blush wireless telegraphy or the telephone are as surprising as telepathy. The man in the street does not understand the mechanism of the one, and he has no time to study the ponderous tomes in which is collected the alleged evidence for the other. Where there is so much smoke, there must be some fire, he thinks. He is in the habit of accepting the opinions of experts and of respecting the opinions of those who back their beliefs with money. If Christian Science can build magnificent

marble temples, Christian Science must be a reality. If Professor James of Harvard believes in Mrs. Piper, and learned societies print and gravely discuss the drivellings of "Dr. Phinuit," it would seem that there *are* more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy.

To this attitude of mind Professor Jastrow's book may bring real illumination.

After a general introduction on the various forms of the modern Occult, he subjects the "problems" of Psychical Research to a close scrutiny and shows that, so far as they are questions legitimately to be asked, they fall within the field of scientific psychology: "The differentiation of a group of problems on the basis of unusualness of occurrence, of mysteriousness of origin, of doubtful authenticity, or of apparent paradoxical or transcendent character, is as illogical as it is unnecessary." The chapter on "The Logic of Mental Telepathy" brings out the subjective character of our recognition of coincidence, its dependence on the accidental direction of interest, and illustrates with many apt anecdotes the *a priori* probability of the multiplication of coincidence in an age of incessant mental activity and wide-spread dissemination of identical ideas and information. It would be easy to collect an enormous mass of evidence in support of the thesis that quarrels and divorces are caused by opposition in the horoscope, and are most frequent between those whose birthdays fall six months apart. But the scientific man would be under no obligation to examine such evidences, because the hypothesis is illegitimate and contradicts the fundamental conceptions underlying the totality of our knowledge. The same may be said of the hypothesis of telepathy as an explanation of coincidence.

"The Psychology of Deception" explains a large number of the typical performances of conjurers and mediums as they appear to the spectator and as they are worked behind the scenes. The evidence is overwhelming that the skilful conjurer can beat the medium on his own ground. Why in spite of this the medium retains his following is explained in the Psychology of Spiritualism, an exhaustive analysis of the mental conditions of credulity and self-deception. One of the chief of them is the over-confidence of the average man in his own untrained perceptions, his failure to recognise that he is about as competent to form an opinion as to whether what he sees at a *séance* is, explicable as conjuring or not, as he is to pronounce on the genuineness of a Syrian manuscript.

There is one aspect of the matter on which I could wish that Professor Jastrow had been even more outspoken, although it is easy to read between his lines, and it must be admitted that his book gains greatly in practical persuasiveness from its judicial and moderate tone. I refer to what Huxley calls "the downright lying of people whose word it is impossible to doubt." This type of explanation is out of favor to-day, and it is undoubtedly a tactical error to have recourse to it in controversy. Nevertheless, no analysis of the "phenomena" of occultism is adequate that ignores the plain fact that such sense of truth as we possess has been developed in

connexion with the practical business of life and is rudimentary in relation to the marvellous and the supernatural. Professor Jastrow says: "Be it distinctly understood that we do not for an instant impute wilful perversion of the truth." And Mr. Furness speaks of the "honest men and women" at his side who solemnly affirmed that they saw what they did not and could not see. The experienced medium, if he frankly spoke his mind, would probably reply with the worthy Dr. Caius: "Honest? Vat shall de honest man do in my closet? Dere is no honest man shall come in my closet!" This of course does not mean that all educated witnesses to impossible phenomena are dishonest. But it does mean that the presumptions are rather against them than in their favor.

Professor Jastrow's book has sent me back to the two immortal treatises of Lucian, the *Philopseudes* and the *False Prophet*. "Why," asks Lucian at the outset of the former, "why is it that the great mass of mankind are so mightily given to lying when they have nothing to gain from it except the mere delight in the incredible and the untrue?" That is what I call a bold entry into the heart of the subject. The collection of ghost stories and the account of the career of Alexander of Abonitichos that follow present parallels to the greater part of the phenomena of modern occultism. Madame Blavatsky's shrine at Adyar from which were mysteriously issued answers to letters placed within its recesses, is the counterpart of the oracle of the sacred serpent operated by Lucian's hero among the innocent Paphlagonians. The brazen tablets of the Book of Mormon dug up at the opportune moment are an infringement of one of his patents. He had little to learn from our modern adepts in the arts of opening sealed letters, producing materialisations and optical illusions, or surreptitiously collecting the family and personal gossip, the fragmentary revelation of which in obscure and ambiguous phrase amazes and overawes the easy dupe. Haunted houses, mystic rapping, levitations, bewitched broomsticks, telepathic premonitions are described in beautifully defined examples. The fallacy of analogy to which Professor Jastrow has devoted a chapter which is an interesting supplement to the well-known section of Mill's Logic, is illustrated by the employment of the hide of a deer to cure rheumatic or gouty affections of the feet,—for is not the deer swift? And Lucian's conclusion of the whole matter would, I doubt not, be accepted in substance by Professor Jastrow. "To defend one's mind against these follies a man must have an adamantine faith, so that, even if he is not able to detect the precise trick by which the illusion is produced, he at any rate retains his conviction that the whole thing is a lie and an impossibility."

If challenged to produce the logical canons which justify this negative dogmatism and distinguish the wonders of science which we accept on testimony from those of occultism, the testimony to which we reject *a priori*, I should say:

1. The one are verifiable at will under strictly definable conditions. The other are not.

2. The one conform to the principle of objective material continuity as ex-

pressed in the laws of the indestructibility of matter and the persistence of force. The other do not.

3. The evidence for the alleged phenomena of occultism violates the principle of continuity and rational order in the development of human knowledge. Our knowledge of the X rays, for example, has been attained by a continuous progress every step of which lies before us in the history of science. We have every reason to believe that this is the law of all genuine discovery by the human mind. There is an overwhelming presumption against "discoveries" which both by their methods and their authors are cut off from this rational relation to the inherited totality of human knowledge. No one of the canons implied in these statements is perhaps a metaphysical or mathematical certainty. But they are all supported by a weight of presumption that has been accumulating in geometrical ratio for centuries. There is very little if any presumption in favor of either the competence or the entire good faith of human testimony to isolated and unusual occurrences. Such testimony therefore cannot create even a *prima facie* case for investigation until the alleged facts can be reproduced at will under conditions that absolutely exclude the more probable hypotheses of fraud or self-delusion.

Space fails me to speak of the long and valuable chapter on Hypnotism and its antecedents. The line between fact and fable is especially difficult of discernment for the layman here. Professor Jastrow hints, what I have always believed, that there is a considerable admixture of fable in the practice as well as in the theory of the school of Charcot. I hope that he will find occasion to speak his mind more fully. The study of involuntary movements makes visible to the eye as charted by an ingenious mechanism the unconscious movements of the hand and arm in the line of the direction of attention, thus proving conclusively that one notorious form of mind-reading may very well be muscle-reading. Two or three other chapters lie a little apart from the main theme of the book. Especially interesting is the account of Helen Keller's dream life in "Dreams of the Blind." In using the form *propagandum* has not Professor Jastrow himself fallen a victim to the fallacy of analogy of which he writes so instructively? PAUL SHOREY.

AÇVAGHOSHA'S DISCOURSE ON THE AWAKENING OF FAITH IN THE MAHÂYÂNA. Translated for the first time from the Chinese version by *Teitaro Suzuki*. Chicago: The Open Court Pub. Co.; London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., Ltd. 1900. Pages, xiv, 160. Price, cloth, \$1 25 net.

Açvaghosha, as the author of the *Buddhacarita*, the famous poem on the life of Buddha, is well known to Western Buddhist scholars; but as the great Buddhist philosopher, who practically formulated the doctrines of the Mahâyâna school, he is almost unknown even to the best informed students of Buddhism. And the reason is plain. For, while the general study of Buddhism has made great advances owing to our increased knowledge of Pâli and Sanskrit, the history of its doctrinal development has never been thoroughly investigated. This latter task requires